1: Washington S-4 (no date) 1956 AF13 Northwest China AF13
Sinkiang AI1

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W A group of patrilineally
563 related families forms the basic economic (i.e., migrational)
621 unit in Mongol society. Pastures are distributed among such
S units. The structure of the society itself dictates a certain
W collectivistic working concept. Mongol social groupings are
[622] led by tribal chieftains, who are directly responsible to the
563 district Chinese official. Mongol society, unlike other North-
177 western societies, has not undergone great changes under
668 Communist influences. Their basic pattern of life has remained
the same as it was under the Manchu and Republican regimes.

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563 The Oirats (or Western Mongols:
233 The Oirats of the Northwest are primarily pastoral nomads.
[434] Their chief source of income is cattle, horses, sheep and
[731] goats. Because they live in a desert-steppe area they move
around in larger or smaller groups depending upon the avail-
able resources.

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563 The designation for these small economic and migrational
621 units or camps is "xotn" which includes a group of nuclear
[594] families patrilineally related - tracing descent from a common
[613] ancestor in the third, fourth, or fifth generation.

Membership in this group can be gained by adoption, by
[597] attachment of a daughter's husband in the case of a man
with no sons and of poor unrelated families or poor related
families on the paternal side. Although some poorer families
remained apart from these "xotn" it usually is more worth-
while to add their few cattle, etc., to that of the larger
group and render services in return for the benefits gained
S thereby.

[613] Among the Oirats the closer an individual's relationship
[554] to the ancestor, the greater prestige and status he enjoys in
this group.

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563 The headman or elder ("axalaci") dwells in a tent situated in
361 the front of the encampment facing south. The remainder of
[622] the group is arranged according to the age of the male members
S in a circle behind the dwelling of the elder. The dependent
[613] families are situated in the rear of the circle but still according
[554] to the closeness of their relation to the ancestor.

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563 Wives of members of these extended families are also
621 affected by the social set-up; their position and status varies
593 directly with that of their husbands, although a wife's position
562 as far as respect patterns go was never equal to her husband's.
A wife observes strict respect for her husband's kinsmen who
possess, by reason of age and relationship, a higher position
than that of her husband. Very often she will not even pronounce
the names of any of these elder gentlemen out of respect for
them. The status of the wife grows with that of her husband
during his lifetime. When he dies, she can either remain
living with his kinsmen, in which case she holds the same
position socially that he had during his lifetime, or she can